

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

Criminal Justice Statistics Special Report

Homicide in North Dakota, 2003



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The term "homicide," for purposes of this report, includes the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) offenses of murder and non-negligent manslaughter. Homicide refers to the "willful killing of one human being by another." It does not include attempts to kill, assaults to kill, suicides, accidental deaths, justifiable homicides or deaths caused by gross negligence.

HOMICIDE IN 2003

- In 2003, twelve homicide deaths were known to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. Based on a state population estimate of 634,000, the resulting homicide rate for the state of North Dakota was 1.9 per 100,000 population. See Table 2 on page 3 for information regarding rates for previous years.
- **Victim Gender:** Six of the homicide victims were male.
- **Victim Age:** Ten of the victims were adults. "Adult" is defined as a person aged 18 or older. See Table 1 on page 2 for a summary of homicide incidents in 2003.
- **Weapons:** Firearms were involved in the deaths of eleven homicide victims. One victim died as the result of a beating.
- **Domestic Violence:** Eight of the twelve homicides in 2003 resulted from domestic violence incidents. See definition on page 10.
- **Assailant Gender:** All of the identified assailants were male.
- **Assailant Age:** All of the identified assailants were adults.
- While tribal law enforcement agencies and any other federal law enforcement entities in the state do not participate in the state UCR program, every effort is made to include all homicide incidents occurring within the state's borders.

Table 1
Summary of Homicide Incidents
North Dakota, 2003

Date and Location of Incident	Victim(s)		Assailant(s)		Weapon Used	Relationship of Victim(s) to Assailant(s)	Circumstances
	AGE	SEX	AGE	SEX			
3/17/03 Spirit Lake Reservation	18	M	19	M	Firearm - 30 caliber handgun	Cousin	Domestic Violence Individuals drinking heavily and assailant shot victim in the head.
4/15/03 Valley City	42 16 21	F F M	56	M	Firearm	Ex-girlfriend Acquaintance Acquaintance	Domestic Violence Lovers Quarrel
5/14/03 Ellendale, Dickey County	32	F	38	M	Shotgun	Wife	Domestic Violence Victim shot while sleeping.
5/17/03 Williston	17	M	18	M	Personal weapon	Acquaintance	Victim struck in head from behind.
6/12/03 Morton County	20	F	21	M	Shotgun	Girlfriend	Domestic Violence Murder/Suicide
6/25/03 Valley City	33	M	23	M	Rifle	Brother	Domestic Violence Murder/Suicide
8/22/03 Traill County	45	F	24	M	Handgun 44 magnum	Mother	Domestic Violence Murder/Suicide
10/30 or 10/31/03 Bismarck	40 48	M M	45	M	Firearm .45 caliber handgun	Acquaintance	Victims found shot in house. Murder/Suicide
11/17/03 Minot	19	F	20	M	Shotgun	Acquaintance	Victim found shot at assailants home.

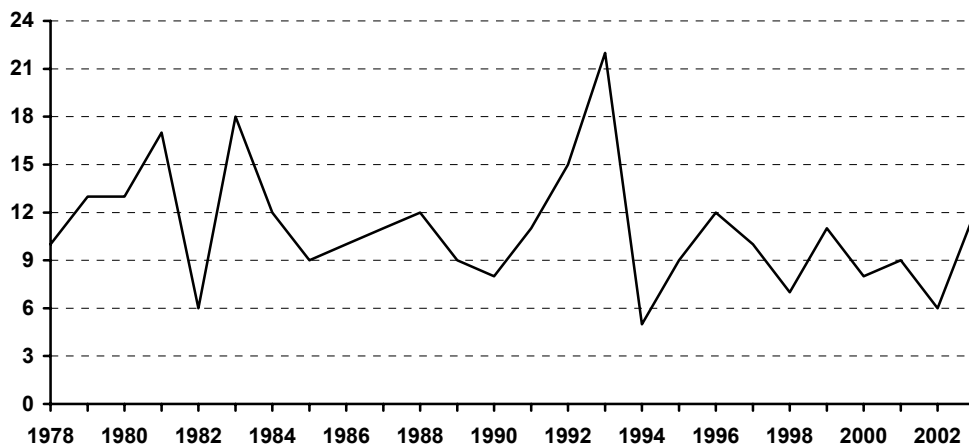
HOMICIDE TOTALS AND RATES

- Table 2 on page 3 provides yearly homicide totals and homicide rate information for North Dakota during the period 1978-2003.
- The average number of homicide deaths per year during this period is 11.

Table 2
Homicide Rate
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Year	Homicide Total	Population Estimate	Rate/100,000 Population
1978	10	651,000	1.5
1979	13	652,000	2.0
1980	13	652,700	2.0
1981	17	652,200	2.6
1982	6	670,000	0.9
1983	18	680,000	2.6
1984	12	686,000	1.7
1985	9	686,000	1.3
1986	10	679,000	1.5
1987	11	672,000	1.6
1988	12	663,000	1.8
1989	9	660,000	1.4
1990	8	638,800	1.3
1991	11	635,000	1.7
1992	15	636,000	2.4
1993	22	635,000	3.5
1994	5	638,000	0.8
1995	9	641,000	1.4
1996	12	644,000	1.9
1997	10	641,000	1.6
1998	7	638,000	1.1
1999	11	634,000	1.7
2000	8	642,200	1.2
2001	9	634,450	1.4
2002	6	634,110	0.9
2003	12	634,000	1.9

Figure 1
Homicide in North Dakota
1978-2003



VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER

- Fifty-nine percent of the 285 total homicide victims during the period 1978-2003 were male.

Table 3
Gender of Homicide Victims
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Year	Male	Female	Total
1978	6	4	10
1979	10	3	13
1980	9	4	13
1981	9	8	17
1982	3	3	6
1983	10	8	18
1984	5	7	12
1985	7	2	9
1986	8	2	10
1987	6	5	11
1988	8	4	12
1989	4	5	9
1990	3	5	8
1991	4	7	11
1992	10	5	15
1993	15	7	22
1994	1	4	5
1995	6	3	9
1996	6	6	12
1997	7	3	10
1998	5	2	7
1999	7	4	11
2000	4	4	8
2001	7	2	9
2002	2	4	6
2003	6	6	12
Total 1978-2003	168 (59%)	117 (41%)	285

VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - AGE

- Of the 285 homicides during the period 1978-2003, 85 percent were adults. See Table 4 below.
- Forty-seven percent of homicide victims were between the ages of 21 and 40. See Table 5 on the following page for information regarding age and gender of victims.

**Table 4
Homicide Victims
Juvenile and Adult
North Dakota, 1978-2003**

Year	Juvenile	Adult	Age Unknown	Total
1978		10		10
1979	3	10		13
1980	3	10		13
1981	2	15		17
1982		6		6
1983	2	15	1	18
1984	5	7		12
1985		9		9
1986		10		10
1987	2	9		11
1988	1	11		12
1989	2	7		9
1990		8		8
1991	3	8		11
1992	3	12		15
1993	7	15		22
1994		5		5
1995	2	7		9
1996		12		12
1997		10		10
1998	1	6		7
1999	1	10		11
2000		8		8
2001		9		9
2002	2	4		6
2003	2	10		12
Total 1978-2003	41	243	1	285

Table 5
Homicide Victims
by Age and Gender
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Age	Male	Female	Total
Unknown		1	1
Less than 1 year	6	6	12
01-05	4	5	9
06-10	1	6	7
11-15	2	3	5
16-20	17	9	26
21-25	31	10	41
26-30	20	13	33
31-35	13	14	27
36-40	18	15	33
41-45	13	9	22
46-50	12	7	19
51-55	11	6	17
56-60	1	3	4
61-65	6	3	9
Over 65	13	7	20
Total 1978-2003	168	117	285

WEAPONS AND VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

- Fifty-two percent of deaths due to homicide during the period 1978-2003 resulted from firearm use. See Table 6 below.
- In homicides involving firearms, the weapon was more likely to be a long gun than a handgun.
- Twenty-six of the 285 total homicide deaths involved the use of "personal weapons." Personal weapons include the use of hands, fists and feet as weapons.

**Table 6
Weapons of Homicide
North Dakota, 1978-2003**

Year	Handgun	Other Firearm	Knife	Blunt Instrument	Personal Weapon	Other or Unknown	Total
1978	4	4	1		1		10
1979	3	3	2	1	3	1	13
1980	5	5	2			1	13
1981	3	5	3		1	5	17
1982		3	3				6
1983		9	4	2		3	18
1984	5	2				5	12
1985	3	2	1		2	1	9
1986	3	1	2	2	1	1	10
1987	2	4	5				11
1988	9				2	1	12
1989	2	3	2		1	1	9
1990	3	1	2	1	1		8
1991		4	1	1		5	11
1992	2	6	4	2	1		15
1993	6	4	5	2	2	3	22
1994	1	2				2	5
1995	2	2	1	2		2	9
1996	3	4	4			1	12
1997		1	1	2	4	2	10
1998		3	2			2	7
1999	1	4	3	1		2	11
2000	2	1	2	1	2		8
2001	2	2	1	1	2	1	9
2002	1	1			2	2	6
2003	4	7			1		12
Total 1978-2003	66	83	51	18	26	41	285

- Firearms were used in 44 percent of the homicides of juveniles. Fifty-four percent of adult deaths due to homicide involved firearms. See Table 7 below.
- Forty-eight percent of homicides of males and 59 percent of homicides of females involved the use of firearms. See Table 8.
- Twenty-three percent of homicides of males and 11 percent of homicides of females involved knives.

Table 7
Homicide Victims
by Weapon and Age Category
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Weapon	Juvenile	Adult	Age Unknown	Total
Handgun	8	58		66
Other Firearm	10	73		83
Knife	1	50		51
Blunt Instrument	2	16		18
Personal Weapon	8	18		26
Other or Unknown	12	28	1	41
Total 1978-2003	41	243	1	285

Table 8
Homicide Victims
by Weapon and Gender
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Weapon	Male	Female	Total
Handgun	40	26	66
Other Firearm	40	43	83
Knife	38	13	51
Blunt Instrument	14	4	18
Personal Weapon	17	9	26
Other or Unknown	19	22	41
Total 1978-2003	168	117	285

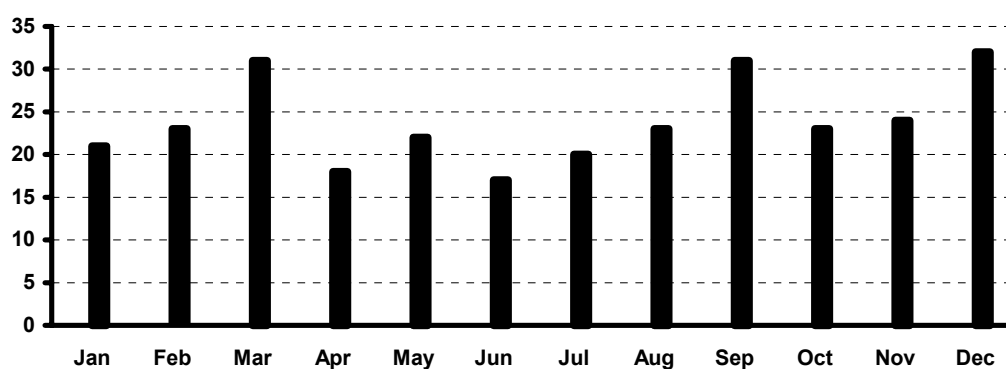
MONTH OF OCCURRENCE

- During the period 1978-2003, the month of December had the highest number of deaths. See Table 9 below. Figure 2 illustrates this information graphically.

Table 9
Deaths Due to Homicide
by Month, 1978-2003

Month	Number	Percent of Total Homicides
January	21	7.4 %
February	23	8.1
March	31	10.9
April	18	6.3
May	22	7.7
June	17	5.9
July	20	7.0
August	23	8.1
September	31	10.9
October	23	8.1
November	24	8.4
December	32	11.2
Total 1978-2003	285	100.0

Figure 2
Homicides by Month of Occurrence
North Dakota, 1978-2003



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEATHS

For purposes of this report, domestic violence deaths include those involving a spouse, former spouse, parent, child, persons related by blood or marriage, persons in a present or former dating relationship, persons who are presently residing together or have resided together in the past, persons who have a child in common regardless of whether they are or have been married or have lived together at any time, other persons on premises when a domestic incident occurs, and romantic triangle situations.

- For the period 1978-2003, 51 percent of deaths due to homicide involved domestic violence.

**Table 10
Domestic Violence Deaths
North Dakota, 1978-2003**

Year	Domestic	Non-Domestic	No Assailant Identified	Homicide Total
1978	5	4	1	10
1979	4	9		13
1980	7	6		13
1981	8	7	2	17
1982	4	1	1	6
1983	7	10	1	18
1984	10	2		12
1985	2	7		9
1986	5	4	1	10
1987	3	7	1	11
1988	6	5	1	12
1989	5	3	1	9
1990	5	3		8
1991	5	4	2	11
1992	11	4		15
1993	11	11		22
1994	4	1		5
1995	3	6		9
1996	7	5		12
1997	2	8		10
1998	5	2		7
1999	6	5		11
2000	6	1	1	8
2001	2	4	3	9
2002	4	1	1	6
2003	8	4		12
Total 1978-2003	145	124	16	285

- Persons killed in domestic violence incidents were more likely to be killed with a firearm than those killed in non-domestic incidents.
- Seventy-one percent of female deaths in domestic violence incidents involved firearms, while 32 percent of female deaths in non-domestic violence incidents involved firearms.
- Seventy-three percent of female homicide victims were killed in domestic violence incidents, compared to 36 percent of males.

Table 11
Domestic Violence Deaths
by Type of Weapon and Age Category of Victim
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Handgun	5	31	3	22
Other Firearm	9	49	1	23
Knife		21	1	25
Blunt Instrument	1	5	1	11
Personal Weapon	6	4	2	13
Other or Unknown	5	9	6	16
Total 1978-2003	26	119	14	110

Table 12
Domestic Violence Deaths
by Type of Weapon and Gender of Victim
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	14	22	21	4
Other Firearm	20	38	19	5
Knife	14	7	21	5
Blunt Instrument	2	4	12	
Personal Weapon	5	5	12	3
Other or Unknown	5	9	11	11
Total 1978-2003	60	85	96	28

CLEARANCE RATES

- Cases may be "cleared by arrest" of an assailant, or "cleared exceptionally," if a physical arrest cannot be made for reasons beyond the control of law enforcement. An example of an exceptional clearance would be a case in which the assailant committed suicide after killing someone.
- "Clearances" should not be interpreted as "convictions." The information regarding clearances, collected through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, reflects law enforcement activity. If an arrest is made, the UCR program considers the case cleared. UCR data does not reflect the results of prosecution of assailants.
- The average clearance rate for homicides in North Dakota during the period from 1978 to 2003 is 94 percent.

Table 13
Clearance Rates for Homicides
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Year	Total Cleared	Total Homicides	North Dakota Clearance Rate	National Clearance Rate*
1978	9	10	90 %	76 %
1979	13	13	100	73
1980	13	13	100	72
1981	15	17	88	72
1982	5	6	83	74
1983	17	18	94	76
1984	12	12	100	74
1985	9	9	100	72
1986	9	10	90	70
1987	10	11	91	70
1988	11	12	92	70
1989	8	9	89	68
1990	8	8	100	67
1991	9	11	82	67
1992	15	15	100	65
1993	22	22	100	66
1994	5	5	100	64
1995	9	9	100	65
1996	12	12	100	67
1997	10	10	100	66
1998	7	7	100	69
1999	11	11	100	69
2000	7	8	88	63
2001	6	9	67	63
2002	5	6	83	64
2003	12	12	100	Not Available

* Clearance rates reported in annual Crime in the United States reports published by the FBI.

IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER

- During the period 1978-2003, 90 percent of the 278 identified homicide assailants were male.
- Sixteen homicides during 1978-2003 have not had an assailant identified by law enforcement.

Table 14
Identified Homicide Assailants
by Gender
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Year	Male	Female	Total
1978	9		9 *
1979	14	2	16
1980	15	1	16
1981	9	3	12 *
1982	4	1	5 *
1983	17	2	19 *
1984	8		8
1985	12		12
1986	8		8 *
1987	10		10 *
1988	9	3	12 *
1989	8		8 *
1990	4	3	7
1991	8		8 *
1992	11	3	14
1993	17	3	20
1994	4	1	5
1995	19		19
1996	13	2	15
1997	8	1	9
1998	5	2	7
1999	8	1	9
2000	7	1	8 *
2001	8		8 *
2002	5		5 *
2003	9		9
Total 1978-2003	249 (90%)	29 (10%)	278

* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

- Eighty-seven percent of the total 278 assailants identified by law enforcement were adults. See Table 15 below.
- Of the 278 assailants identified by law enforcement, 66 percent were between the ages of 16 and 35. See Table 16 on the following page for information on age and gender of identified assailants.

Table 15
Identified Homicide Assailants
Juvenile and Adult
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Year	Juvenile	Adult	Total
1978	2	7	9 *
1979	2	14	16
1980	7	9	16
1981		12	12 *
1982		5	5 *
1983		19	19 *
1984	1	7	8
1985		12	12
1986		8	8 *
1987	2	8	10 *
1988		12	12 *
1989	2	6	8 *
1990		7	7
1991	1	7	8 *
1992	2	12	14
1993	3	17	20
1994		5	5
1995	13	6	19
1996	1	14	15
1997		9	9
1998	1	6	7
1999		9	9
2000		8	8 *
2001		8	8 *
2002		5	5 *
2003		9	9
Total 1978-2003	37 (13%)	241 (87%)	278

* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

Table 16
Identified Homicide Assailants
by Age and Gender
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Age	Male	Female	Total
01-05			0
06-10			0
11-15	19	2	21
16-20	50	4	54
21-25	57	3	60
26-30	35	2	37
31-35	26	7	33
36-40	19	4	23
41-45	17	6	23
46-50	7		7
51-55	5	1	6
56-60	6		6
61-65	4		4
Over 65	4		4
Total 1978-2003	249	29	278

WEAPONS AND IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS

- In homicide incidents involving firearms, juvenile assailants were much more likely to use firearms other than handguns. For adults, long guns were used only slightly more often than handguns.
- Male assailants were more likely to use firearms in homicide incidents, while females were more likely to use knives.
- For incidents involving the use of firearms, male assailants were more likely to use rifles or shotguns than handguns. Conversely, females were more likely to use handguns than other types of firearms.

Table 17
Identified Assailants
by Type of Weapon and Age Category
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Weapon	Juvenile	Adult	Total
Handgun	2	52	54
Other Firearm	19	60	79
Knife	6	52	58
Blunt Instrument	4	20	24
Personal Weapon	2	25	27
Other or Unknown	4	32	36
Total 1978-2003	37	241	278

Table 18
Identified Assailants
by Type of Weapon and Gender
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Weapon	Male	Female	Total
Handgun	48	6	54
Other Firearm	75	4	79
Knife	45	13	58
Blunt Instrument	23	1	24
Personal Weapon	26	1	27
Other or Unknown	32	4	36
Total 1978-2003	249	29	278

- Forty-six percent of assailants identified by law enforcement were involved in domestic violence incidents. See Table 19 below.
- Assailants were more likely to use firearms in domestic incidents than in non-domestic incidents. See Table 20.

Table 19
Identified Homicide Assailants
Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Year	Domestic	Non-Domestic	Total
1978	4	5	9 *
1979	5	11	16
1980	9	7	16
1981	7	5	12 *
1982	4	1	5 *
1983	4	15	19 *
1984	6	2	8
1985	2	10	12
1986	4	4	8 *
1987	3	7	10 *
1988	6	6	12 *
1989	4	4	8 *
1990	4	3	7
1991	4	4	8 *
1992	8	6	14
1993	8	12	20
1994	4	1	5
1995	4	15	19
1996	7	8	15
1997	2	7	9
1998	5	2	7
1999	5	4	9
2000	6	2	8 *
2001	2	6	8 *
2002	4	1	5 *
2003	6	3	9
Total 1978-2003	127 (46%)	151 (54%)	278

* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

Table 20
Weapon Use by Identified Assailants
Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Weapon	Domestic	Non-Domestic	Total
Handgun	30	24	54
Other Firearm	46	33	79
Knife	21	37	58
Blunt Instrument	5	19	24
Personal Weapon	11	16	27
Other or Unknown	14	22	36
Total 1978-2003	127	151	278

- Blunt instruments were more likely to be used by assailants in non-domestic incidents.
- Seventy-two percent of identified female assailants were involved in domestic incidents, compared to 43 percent for males. See Table 22.

Table 21
Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents
by Type of Weapon and Age Category of Assailant
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Handgun	1	29	1	23
Other Firearm	5	41	14	19
Knife	3	18	3	34
Blunt Instrument		5	4	15
Personal Weapon	1	10	1	15
Other or Unknown	2	12	2	20
Total 1978-2003	12	115	25	126

Table 22
Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents
by Type of Weapon and Gender of Assailant
North Dakota, 1978-2003

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	26	4	22	2
Other Firearm	42	4	33	
Knife	11	10	34	3
Blunt Instrument	5		18	1
Personal Weapon	10	1	16	
Other or Unknown	12	2	20	2
Total 1978-2003	106	21	143	8